

## Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program Giving Credit to Model Safety Programs

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To promote safety and health program management and to provide model programs for others to follow, OSHA designed the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). SHARP recognizes small employers in high hazard industries who operate exemplary safety and health programs that prevent job-related injuries and illnesses. SHARP is a recognition program, which provides incentives and support to employers to work with their employees to develop, implement, and continuously improve the effectiveness of their workplace safety programs. SHARP companies have their names removed from OSHA's Programmed Inspection Schedule for one year. SHARP is administered by each state's on-site consultation services program, which operates in Maine through **SafetyWorks!**.

### Private sector employers who meet the following criteria may apply for SHARP approval:

1. Employ not more than 250 employees at the site and not more than 500 total employees at all sites nationwide. (Larger worksites that demonstrate commitment to workplace safety and health beyond the requirements of OSHA standards may be eligible for OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP)).
2. Be an industry that is on OSHA's high hazard list.
3. Be a single, fixed worksite. (Multiple worksites under common management will be evaluated and approved separately. Employers of mobile worksites (i.e., logging, longshoring, construction, etc.) are not currently eligible for SHARP).
4. Have at least one year operating history in order to have established Lost Workday Injury and Illness rate and Total Recordable Case Rate.
5. Have Reduced the Lost Workday Injury and Illness Incidence rate and Total Recordable Case Rate at the worksite to below the industry average.

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Applicants must agree to a full service consultation survey of the workplace, including a complete safety and health program review. A full service survey addresses all real and potential safety and health hazards. **SafetyWorks!** consultants work with employers to correct all hazards and address their continued control. SHARP requires employee involvement in all aspects of the workplace safety and health program.

Companies who meet the requirements for SHARP will be removed from OSHA's Programmed Inspection Schedule for a period of one year. OSHA will continue to make inspections in situations involving imminent danger, fatality/catastrophe, and formal complaints.

Employers granted initial SHARP approval may apply for renewal during the last quarter of the one-year approval period. At renewal time, consultants conduct a complete onsite safety and health survey to ensure that the safety and health programs have been maintained or improved. Workplace hazards must be under control and the elements of the safety and health program must be operating effectively. The employer must also demonstrate that the Lost Workday Illness and Injury Rate and the Total Recordable Case Rate have remained at or below the national average for their industry.

Currently no Maine companies are participating in the SHARP program, although several companies have in the past. For more information or to apply for SHARP, contact **SafetyWorks!** at 624-6400 (TTY: 1-800-794-1110).

### Training Tips

- ✓ **SafetyWorks!** classes provide up-to-date information on the OSHA standards. It is up to supervisors and managers to take the general information and apply it to their workplaces. How do you do that? Assess the hazards at your workplace, involve employees, and make plans and programs that work for your workplace.
- ✓ The **SafetyWorks!** website includes a list of workplace safety and health classes offered by various organizations around the state. To see the list, go to: [www.state.me.us/labor/bls/upsafcl.htm](http://www.state.me.us/labor/bls/upsafcl.htm). If you offer classes and would like us to add them to the list, call Terry Hathaway at 624-6440.

## Innovative Partnership Fosters Safety and Health for Small Businesses

On April 25, 2002, the Maine Department of Labor entered into a groundbreaking agreement with OSHA and the Maine Small Business Development Centers to work together to improve the safety and health performance of small businesses in Maine.

### The agencies will partner to:

- Increase awareness of safety and health information and resources;
- Promote consultation services among small businesses;
- Provide training on OSHA recordkeeping and other topics; and
- Increase the number of Maine small businesses with written, comprehensive safety and health systems.



*Partnering with the Small Business Development Centers will give SafetyWorks! opportunities to reach small and new businesses that have not used the training and consultation services in the past.*

Visit our web site at <http://www.state.me.us/labor/blsmain.htm>

## From the Field: OSHA's New Ergonomics Plan

In early April OSHA issued an ergonomics plan designed to reduce ergonomic injuries at work. The comprehensive plan combines industry-targeted guidelines, enforcement measures, outreach, research and efforts to protect immigrant workers.



*Afternoon stretch: Duane Boynton, Sonya Weed-Berry, Kelly Curtis and Connie LaChance*

## More Injuries May Be a Good Thing

Does that sound crazy? Not according to Peter Snell, an independent safety and workers' compensation consultant in Maine, who says, "the first noticeable indication of program improvement is when the frequency of injury reporting increases."

In Snell's experience, when injury reporting increases injury costs decrease. He has found that the average cost per injury decreases at a faster rate than reported injuries increase. This is at least partly because early reporting of certain injuries, especially musculoskeletal disorders, often results in more effective and less costly treatment.

Snell concludes, "...a modest increase in reported frequency causes a precipitous decrease in average cost per injury, which translates to a major decrease in ... pain and suffering."

For more information go to [www.culturalfactors.com](http://www.culturalfactors.com)

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The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

## Keep Teen Workers Safe

Over 70% of teenagers work. Employers can take positive steps to make sure teens have safe work experiences.

- **Know the occupational safety and health and child labor laws.** Child labor laws limit the hours teens under 18 can work and the jobs they can do. Teens in Maine cannot work alone in a cash-based business, drive for work or perform certain other dangerous jobs. Occupational safety and health regulations apply equally to workers of all ages
- **Make sure teens under 16 have work permits.** Work permits are issued for a specific job. Make sure teens are only doing the job listed on the permit.
- **Identify and eliminate hazards.** Review past injuries and close calls. Hazards can often be eliminated without expensive changes.
- **Provide health and safety training.** Training for teens needs to be hands-on, interactive and fun. Frequent, short sessions work best.
- **Provide effective supervision.** Supervisors must set a good example for safety. Teens are more likely to get injured when they are working alone. Encourage teens to ask questions when they're not sure how to do a job safely.
- **Establish a health and safety committee and include teen workers.** Employees know their jobs well and often have good ideas about how to prevent injuries.
- **Post child labor laws.**

The Maine Department of Labor **Safeteen** kit and website ([www.safeteen.org](http://www.safeteen.org)) help employers and teen workers maintain safe work environments. For a free kit, or if you have questions about employing teens, go to the website or call 207-624-6400 (TTY: 800-794-1110).



Visit our web site at <http://www.state.me.us/labor/blsmain.htm>

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*Spring 2002*

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

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### **Innovation & Recognition**

Innovative approaches to workplace safety and health bring fresh perspectives to old problems. When we look at issues from diverse angles, with different tools and new partners, barriers melt away and dilemmas find solutions. With that in mind we salute OSHA and the Small Business Development Centers for entering into a novel partnership with SafetyWorks! to help small Maine businesses. Working together, we can offer safety and health services to the small businesses that make up a major part of the Maine economy.

Recognition fuels innovation and improvement. SHARP recognizes companies for their success in managing safety programs that reduce hazards and injuries. Achieving SHARP status takes significant effort by businesses and their employees. Many Maine businesses are already making the effort; it's time to apply for SHARP and get that well-earned recognition.



Michael V. Frett, Director  
Bureau of Labor Standards